

Every Child Learning Every Day



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READY TO LEARN

Books for July

By Dr. Stan Steiner

Children discovering their independence is an important part of development.

Here are some books to help adults play a positive role in this process.

"I Love It When You Smile," by Sam McBratney and illustrated by Charles Fuge, 2006, HarperCollins.

Momma Kangaroo tries everything to get little Roo to smile, but he does not want to. At least not until mom and Roo go tumbling down the bank into a mud puddle. The adorable illustrations present one cuddly Roo.

"Shelly," by Margie Palatini and illustrated by Guy Francis, 2006, Dutton. Shelly is not ready to come out of her shell. Her three sibling ducklings

are nonstop talkers all trying to get her to be just like them. When they finally give up on Shelly and go out to play she explores the world in her own independent style.

"They Journey: Stories of Migration," by Cynthia Rylant and illustrated by Lambert Davis, 2006, Blue Sky Press. The migration of animals, birds and insects is surely one of nature's amazing phenomena. Rylant eloquently describes the migration of locusts, whales, eels, butterflies, caribou and terns.

"This Little Piggy and Other Rhymes to Sing and Play," by Jane Yolen and illustrated by Will Hillenbrand, 2006, Candlewick Press. This is one of those books that should accompany every new baby.



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What role do soft drinks play in your child's diet?

Dear Reader:

Two months ago, there was some encouraging news for folks concerned about the well being of children. Several of the nation's soft drink makers announced they would be limiting the high-calorie, sugared beverages sold in their vending machines in elementary and middle schools.

The announcement highlights the concerns that sugary soft drinks are contributing to the epidemic of childhood obesity.

While I applaud the pending changes, I also know that schools are not the only sites where children can get soft drinks or where they develop the soft-drink habit. The decision raises an important question for parents of school-age



Dr. Marilyn Howard
Superintendent of Public Instruction

and preschool children about what we drink at home.

Many reasons exist to limit preschoolers' access to soft drinks.

Health professionals are concerned that soft drinks are replacing milk and water in children's diets.

Milk is an important source of calcium for fast growing bodies. In addition, sugary soda can damage teeth.

Parents can play an important role here by choosing healthier drinks such as water and milk with their meals at home and out.

Soft drinks are not the only culprit in our nation's child obesity problem, but they are a contributor that we can easily control.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Use footprint paths to help children explore movement

Physical Education (P.E.) Central is a website (www.pecentral.org) where educators and others share lesson plans for activities aimed at different age groups.

Below is a preschool activity from that site.

Name of Activity

Pathway movement

Purpose of activity

To assist young children in identifying pathways and to explore movement along those pathways.

Materials needed

Colored construction paper, tape

Description of idea

Cut small footsteps (child size), arrows, dots, squares, and other shapes out of con-



struction paper. It is strongly recommended to have these shapes laminated. Tape shapes on the floor in the movement area to form zig zag, curved and straight lines.

Ask children to move around the room and follow the teacher designed pathways made with the shapes. Children should be allowed to explore the variety of loco-

motor movements they can do while moving along the various pathways.

In addition to taping pathways on the floor in the movement area, tape them on the floor in the children's classroom.

Variations

As children develop a sense of what the pathways are, provide the paper shapes and tape and let them design their own pathways on the floor.

Assessment ideas

At the conclusion of the class or when children return to the classroom, ask that they draw pictures of the curved, zig zag, and straight pathways.



PARENT TIPS

Poll highlights need for pre-K

By the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children

Every week seems to bring a new article applauding the economic sense of investing public dollars in early childhood education. In the business sector, universal preschool is a hot topic.

In January, a Zogby International survey of 205 senior executives at Fortune 1,000 companies and firms with more than 1,000 employees sought the executives' views on preschool education.

What did they find?

American business leaders overwhelmingly favor publicly-supported pre-kindergarten programs, with more than 4 in 5 agreeing with all of the following statements:

- * Investments in effective pre-school programs for children are important if the United States is to remain competitive in the global economy.

- * Investments in effective pre-school programs for children are important for the long-term success of the U.S. economy.

- * Voluntary pre-kindergarten for all children would improve the workforce.

- * Public funding of voluntary pre-K for all children would improve America's workforce.

Significantly, 83% favor an approach that would provide publicly-funded pre-kindergarten with choice – that is, where parents were empowered to choose the pre-K program that is right for them and their child.

Study after study has revealed that children who receive care in high quality settings between the ages of birth to age 5 begin life on a trajectory for success.

A complete report on the poll results is available at: http://www.preschoolcalifornia.org/benefits_of_preschool/reports_studies.html

NUTRITION

Make sure young children drink plenty of water

Summer is usually the hottest time of the year. The sun is in the sky longer and gives children more time to play outside. Usually the more children play, the hotter and more thirsty they get. So what should they drink?

During the hot summer months it is important for children to drink plenty of water. This is especially true for young children who are out in the summer heat more often. Children are playing in parks, at baseball and soccer games, and just

in their own back yards. These activities can cause children to sweat and lose a lot of water, which makes them even thirstier.

When your children are going outside to play be sure you send water with them. A good idea is to keep your children's water cold by freezing half of it in the freezer before they need it.

The ice will melt as they play, keeping their water cold all day long.

It is also good for young

children to eat foods that contain water. This is especially important for children who do not really like to drink water all by itself. Some examples of foods that contain a lot of water are most fruits and vegetables, especially watermelon, lettuce, grapes, and oranges.

These foods taste delicious and will also keep the young child's body cool and supplied with water. So be sure to include these foods and encourage your young children to drink water to keep them safe from dehydration.

SMART STARTS

Matching exercises build reasoning skills

Studies show that when children play matching games, they are strengthening their reasoning skills. Young children may subconsciously group like items together, but it is difficult for them to explain why. You can play games with your child to help him develop his reasoning and communication skills.

Birth to 1 year

Show your baby different pictures. Your baby will be interested in new things, for example, a cat vs. a horse. He may not be as interested in a horse vs. a cow, because they may seem similar to him. Talk to your

baby about how the pictures are similar, and different, i.e., "The horse has four legs. The duck has wings and is yellow."

1 to 3 years old

Play matching games with your toddler. You can ask him to help you sort the clean laundry. Separate the socks, show a striped or brightly colored sock, and ask your child if he can find the sock's mate.

Ask your child to explain why he thinks one pair belongs together, more than another. If several pair very similar, explain why you think they go together.

3 to 5 years old

Fold two piece of paper in quarters. Give your child one sheet, and keep one for yourself.

Working on your own pieces of paper, color in half of the page with imaginary flags, or other colorful drawings such as butterflies. Switch papers, and try to draw matching images. Have your child talk about his drawing with you.

Kindergarten skills

Ability to recognize and group similar objects, and begin to explain how the group was made.

ACTIVITY

The Parade

By Jennifer Williams
2002 Idaho Teacher of the Year

Everyone loves a parade, whether to celebrate a birthday or holiday. Preschoolers can help prepare and collect items for the parade and might want to invite neighborhood friends to join in the fun. Discuss the significance of a 4th of July celebration and why a parade might be fun.

Gather all the toys and decorations that will be used:

Scooters, tricycles, baby buggies and strollers, wagons, skateboards, adult bikes, and any pull toys;

A variety of strings and yarn, ribbons, tissue and construction paper, bells, streamers, balloons, tin cans, yogurt and plastic con-

tainers, cardboard tubes, aluminum pie pans, plastic flowers, flags, material scraps, and other decorative items;

Packing, scotch, or masking tape; and
Scissors and glue.

Procedure:

Help your preschooler collect all items.

Line up scooters, bikes, etc. on a driveway or sidewalk.

Organize all materials into separate piles.

Cut, tear, glue, or tape items together and begin the process of decorating each 'vehicle' for the parade. Items can be woven through spokes, tied to handles, hung from seats, or attached anywhere.

Family members or neighbor kids can begin the parade, perhaps to a park for a picnic.

Children should be encouraged to sing, dance, shout, and play musical instruments or noisemakers to create a festive spirit.

A portable radio or CD player can be brought along for karaoke.

Parade participants and their pets can have their faces decorated or could wear costumes.

This is a wonderfully creative event that can teach children the meaning of July 4th, how to collect and sort, what it means to 'line up', stay in line, and follow the leader. It can be a social event to meet new friends, or an excuse to sing, dance, and create another family tradition.